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CANADA

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Paul Theodore HELLYER

Minister of National Defense

OFFICE OF CENTRAL REFERENCE
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BIOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Paul Hellyer, first elected to Parliament in 1949, was appointed Minister of National Defense by Liberal Prime Minister Lester Pearson on 22 April 1963. Associate Defense Minister from April to June 1957, Hellyer, then only 33, was one of the youngest Cabinet ministers in many years. Defeated in the June 1957 national elections, he returned to Parliament as M.P. for the Toronto Trinity riding in a December 1958 by-election. An able and knowledgeable "Opposition defense critic" of the Progressive-Conservative government from 1958 until early 1963,

Since taking over the Defense portfolio, he has devoted himself wholeheartedly to that job and, in cooperation with the Prime Minister and leading political and economic authorities, has devised a very general plan to establish a flexible, integrated and mobile force capable of being adapted to varying requirements, especially UN needs and situations short of all-out war, at the lowest possible cost. While in opposition, Hellyer had consistently rejected the US proposal to equip the two Canadian BOMARC bases with nuclear warheads on the grounds that NORAD was useless and that no real threat to North America from manned bombers existed, except perhaps as a "mopping-up" action after an ICBM attack. He proposed instead that Canada should concentrate on warning and detection systems and on the building up of strong, tactical, mobile forces.

shortly after his return from the November 1962 NATO parliamentarians' meeting in Paris, he said that Canada should sign a bilateral agreement with the United States and accept nuclear weapons. He added that the rate of Russian missile development had been slower than he had anticipated in 1960 and, as a result, the enemy's manned bombers were still a major threat to the North American continent. Hellyer's statement to honor Canadian commitments to the United States, which almost caused a party split and which was not given Liberal endorsement until mid-January 1963, finally bore fruit in August 1963 when a US-Canadian nuclear weapons agreement was initialed by the Pearson and Kennedy administrations.

Born on 6 August 1923 near the town of Waterford, Ontario, Paul Theodore Hellyer received a degree in aeronautical engineering from the Curtis Wright Technical Institute of Aeronautics in Glendale, California, in 1941 and obtained a B.A. from the University of Toronto in 1949. He was employed in an engineering department of Fleet Aircraft, Ltd., Ontario, from 1942 to 1944. Hellyer joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1944

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